

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSM-03 IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OC-06 CCO-00 SY-05
ACDA-07 AID-05 DHA-02 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01
CU-02 /133 W

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R 311540Z JAN 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1189
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1818

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG, PINT
SUBJ: SADAT LEADS GOE CAMPAIGN TO RECOUP PRESTIGE

REF CAIRO 1729,

SUMMARY: AFTER TEN DAYS OF SILENCE SADAT'S DRAMATIC RE-
EMERGENCE ON SCNE BY ATTENDING AZHAR FRIDAY PRAYERS (REFTEL)
FOLLOWED UP WITH HIGHLY PUBLICIZED MEETINGS WITH LABOR LEADERS
(JAN 29) AND HIGHER UNIV COUNCIL (JAN 30). SADAT TOLD LABOR
LEADERS THAT "FOUR HARD YEARS" NEEDED TO TURN AROUND ECONOMY,
OPEN DOOR CONTRIBUTES TO ECONOMY AND DOESN'T THREATEN PUBLIC
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SECTOR, AND DEMOCRATIC EXPERIEMENT WILL CONTINUE BUT NO
STRIKES, SIT-INS OR DEMONSTRATIONS WILL BE PERMITTED. SADAT
STERNLY LECTURED ACADEMICS THAT UNIVERSITIES ARE FOR LEARNING
AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY WILL HENCEFORTH BE PROHIBITED ON
CAMPUSES. SMALL MINORITIES AND SOVIETS BLAMED FOR RIOTS.
SADAT CRITICISM OF SALIM CABINET READ BY SOME AS PRESAGING
CABINET CHANGES IN NEAR FUTURE. SADAT NOY ONLY LEADING

CAMPAIGN TO RECOUP GOE PRESTIGE, BUT PUTTING A LITTLE DISTANCE
BETWEEN HIMSELF AND CABINET. END SUMMARY

1. MEETING WITH LABOR LEADERS BILLED AS PROOF OF GOE-LABOR
SOLIDARITY. SADAT PRAISED WORKERS AND ORGANIZED LABOR FOR
POSIBITE ATTITUDE, CONDEMING ONLY "ODD MINORITY" FOR DES-
STRUCTURE ACTS. SADAT'S MAJOR POINTS:
--ECONOMY, THOUGH NOT BANKRUPT, "IS EXHAUSTED." PEOPLE MUST
BE PATIENT "FOR FOUR HARD YEARS" UNTIL 1980 (MORE THAN EVER
SADAT'S MAGIC YEAR WHEN OIL AND SUEZ CANAL REVENUES, ALONG
WITH ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES, WILL TURN TIDE FOR ECONOMY.)
MEANWHILE, "ONLY COURSE FOR NATION IS TO ADOPT DIALOGUE
INSTEAD OF BLOODY DESTRUCTIONS."

--ECONOMIC OPEN DOOR WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ECONOMIC HEALTH OF
NATION: ONLY PREVARICATORS PRESENT IT AS THREAT TO PUBLIC SECTOR.

--COMMENT TO RULE OF LAW AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WILL NOT BE
LESSENED; THERE NO QUESTION OF "REOPENING DETENTION CAMPS".
HOWEVER, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE TOLERANT, AS HE WAS IN 1971, 72
AND 73, "OF EVENTS SUCH AS THOSE OF JAN 18 AND 19--"ALL SHOULD
MEMORIZE THIS DATE"--WHICH "DESIGNED TO TOPPLE REGIME BY
CREATING PANIC THROUGH BURNING CAIRO...THERE WAS A PREMEDIATED
PREVARICATION TO INCITE THE PEOPLE".

--WHOSE INTERESTS WERE SERVED BY DEMONSTRATIONS? LIBYA, USSR
AND ISRAEL, "WHICH IS AT PEAK OF HAPPINESS," WRONGLY BELIEVING
THAT EGYPT WILL COME WEAK TO BENEVA.

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--LABOR PRAISED FOR ITS DETERMINATION NOT TO BECOME INVOLVED
IN POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITIES; A SEPARATE POLITICAL PARTY, AS
ORGANIZED LABOR RECOGNIZES, "WOULD TAKE IT OUT OF THE
ALLIANCE WHICH WE HAVE AL ACCEPTED." (COMMENT: THIS, FOR PUBLIC
CONSUMPTION, IS REVERSAL OF THE FACTS. ORGANIZED LABOR DID
DECIDE AGAINST ATTEMPT TO LAUNCH ITS OWN PARTY IN LATE NOV,
AS MORE OPPOSITIONIST ELEMENTS HAD INSISTED. NOW, HOWEVER,
BUOYED UP BY POST-RIOT TURMOIL, THEY MADE PRIVATE PITCH
FOR THEIR OWN PARTY WHICH SADAT REJECTED OUT OF HAND. END
COMMENT.)

--LABOR WILL ALWAYS BE HEARD: "DEMOCRATIC EXERCISE THROUGH
DEMOCRATIC CHANNELS IS 100 PERCENT PERMISSIBLE, BUT THERE WILL
BE NO STIRKES, SIT INS OR DEMONSTRATIONS."

2. MEETING WITH HIGHER UNIV COUNCIL, JAN 30: SADAT GATHERED
UNIV HEADS FOR STERN LECTURE, REMINDING THEM THAT UNIV-
SITIES ARE PLACES FOR EDUCATION, NOT POLITICAL ACTION, STRIKES
AND AGITATION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. PROFESSORS SHOULD PURGE THIER

RANKS OF THE POLITICALLY UNRELIABLE, AND STUDENTS SHOULD EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT TO POLITICAL EXPRESSION (AS INDIVIDUALS) THROUGH EXISTING POLITICAL PARTIES. AMPUS GROUPINGS WITH POLITICAL AIMS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED. (HIGHER UNIV COUNCIL MEETS JAN 31 TO CONSIDER WHAT MEASURES TO TAKE IN VIEW OF PRES'S GUIDANCE. SADAT TO ADDRESS STUDENT LEADERS IN YET ANOTHER MEETING FEB 1.

3. SADAT BLAMED "SUSPICIOUS MINORITY" OF STUDENTS OFR "INTEGRATED SCHEME TO BURN CAIRO". THIS MINORITY "EXPLOITED OPPORTUNITY OF PRICE DECISIONS" TO INCITE MASSES, AND SADAT "STOPPED THOSE DECISIONS TO STOP SEDITION. BUT ALL MUST REALIZE THAT THERE NO ALTERNATIVE TO ECONOMIC REFORM AND THAT COUNTRY'S COURSE MUST BE CORRECTED REGARDLESS OF DIFFICULTIES..."

4. SADAT ALSO TOOK OCCASION FOR STRONG ATTACK ON USSR (SEPTTEL).

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5. ACCORDING TO AFP REPORT, IN ABOVE MEETING SADAT ALSO MADE CASE THAT SUBSIDIES FOR CERTAIN COMMODITIES HAVE BEEN GOING INTO POCKETS OF PROFITEERS AND THAT "PRICE RISES DID NOT AFFECT MASSES." HE ALSO REPORTEDLY REPROACHED GOVT (I.E. SALIM CABINET) FOR "ERROR OF BRUSQUE ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRICE RISE" WHICH, IF PRESENTED IN CONNECTION WITH NEW TAX LAW PROVIDING INTER ALIA LOW INCOME TAX RELIEF, "WOULD HAVE PREVENTED INSIDIOUS INTERPREATION."

6. COMMENT: QUESTION OF WHEN SADAT WOULD ADDRESS PEOPLE ON STATE OF NATION IS AT LEAST PARTLY ANSWERED BY HIS IMPASSIONED WORDS TO WORKERS AND UNIV HEADS. UNABLE TO ANNOUNCE GOOD NEWS OF MAJOR RELIEF FROM RICH ARABS, SADAT APPEARS TO BE PLAYING FOR TIME BY LENDING HIS PRESTIGE TO GOE EFFORT TO FIX BLAME ON DOMESTIC COMMUNISTS AND USSR, LAYING DOWN LAW, AND STRESSING HONEST GOOD WILL OF HIS REGIME. MEDIA FOCUS ON SADAT SUGGESTS HE IS SOLE FIGURE WHO MAY BE ABLE TO RESTORE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN GOVT. WE ARE STRUCK BY HIS REPROACH TO SALIM AND CABINET FOR BRUSQUE MANNER IN WHICH PRICE INCREASES PRESENTED, A WIDELY ARTICULATED CRITICISM. SOME READ THIS AS PRESAGING CABINET CHANGES IN NEAR FUTURE.

7. WHILE SADAT WELL KNOWN FOR ANTI-SOVIET PHOBIA, SHARP ESCALATION OF HIS RHETORIC AGAINST USSR MAY BE PARTLY DIRECTED AT GOD-FEARING, OIL-RICH ARAB BRETHREN. AT HOME, MEANWHILE, IT MAKING LAOBR LEADERS NERVOUS SINCE THEY FEAR THAT SOVIETS WILL RETALIATE THROUGH DIMINISHED TRADE RELATIONS, CAUSING PRODUCTION CUTBACKS AND CONSEQUENT UNEMPLOYMENT. SADAT MAY BE OVERESTIMATING VIABILITY OF THIS ANTI-COMMUNIST PRESENTATION, RIASING POSSIBILITY THAT HE HIMSELF HAS BECOME ISOLATED FROM HOPES AND FEARS OF EGYPTIAN PEOPLE.

8. TEST OF NEW GET-TOUGH POLICY TOWARD UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
WILL COME AFTER FEB 12 RESUMPTION OF CLASSES.
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